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ON PAGE 94

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New Roles for Recce

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RECENTLY, the Subcommittee for Investigations and Oversight of the House Committee on Science and Technology issued its report, *Information Technology for Emergency Management*, culminating two years of hearings on the use of modern technology to deal with both natural and man-made disasters.

Opening the hearings, Subcommittee Chairman (now Senator) Albert Gore, Jr., said: "We are all aware of the tremendous technological advances made in the last few years. We have seen and benefited from their applications in the areas of health and medicine, the environment, and other scientific fields. But we must ensure that this technology is applied to our nation's ability to predict, prevent, and respond quickly and effectively to natural or man-made disasters."

I testified at those hearings that there was one resource not being used to its full potential. If it were properly employed it could save countless lives and billions of dollars in property damage each year. That resource is the nation's aerial reconnaissance and interpretation technology.

Few outside the military and intelligence fields are aware of this resource. Fewer still know how to interpret that technology, and even fewer know how and when to apply it. Yet it is the same technology with which the United States monitors SALT and the Middle East Truce Agreement; observes and predicts crop yields in the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, Argentina, and India; and assesses damage caused by such catastrophes as the Italian, Guatemalan, and Alaskan earthquakes.